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Dust Diseases Care

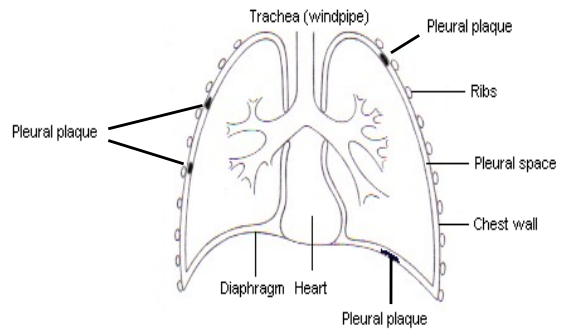


Pleural Plaques Factsheet

What are pleural plaques?

Pleural plaques are patches of scar tissue which occur on the pleura. They are smooth, white, raised irregular areas of fibrous tissue. They vary in size from small to large.

Asbestos related conditions can be divided into two groups: These are Non-malignant (non-cancerous) or Malignant (cancerous). Pleural plaques are non-malignant.



What are the pleura?

The pleura are the two natural membranes that surround each lung, one joined to surface of the lung and one joined to the inside of the chest wall.

How does dust get to the pleura?

Dust can easily be breathed into the lungs. Normally these dust particles are removed by the lung's natural defence mechanisms but these defences may not be able to remove some types of asbestos completely. Some asbestos fibres make their way through the lungs to reach the pleura where they may cause irritation and scarring.

Who gets pleural plaques?

Not everyone who is exposed to asbestos will develop pleural plaques, but they are commonly seen in people who have been exposed.

How are pleural plaques diagnosed?

Over many years the body deposits small amounts of calcium in pleural plaques which allows them to be seen on a chest X-ray. Many individuals will have developed pleural plaques without ever knowing it.

Do pleural plaques turn into a dust disease?

No. Pleural plaques themselves do not turn into a dust disease, though some people with pleural plaques do also develop a dust disease.

Do they require treatment?

Pleural plaques do not produce any symptoms and in general do not affect normal functioning of the lungs. Pleural plaques do not require treatment.

Does the DDC give compensation for pleural plaques?

Applicants with pleural plaques alone are not eligible for compensation from the Dust Diseases Care. Pleural plaques are an indicator of asbestos exposure. For applicants with pleural plaques the DDC offers on-going medical examinations to check whether they may also have developed a dust disease.

Enquires (Toll free): Phone; 1800 550 027